

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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11

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 /028 W

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R 191125Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4127

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 2551

FOLLOWING REPEAT MADRAS 0350 SENT ACTION NEW DELHI

INFO BOMBAY/CALCUTTA/COLOMBO 19 FEB 76

QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRAS 0350

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: DMK FEARS BAN AND TRIES TO FORESTALL IT.

1. FORMER CHIEF MINISTER KARUNANIDHI TOLD NEWSMEN IN MADRAS FEBRUARY 18 THAT THE DMK WOULD STAND BY THE GOVERNMENT TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER IN TAMIL NADU. KARUNANIDHI ALSO SAID HE HAD DEPUTED K. RAJARAM, FORMER DMK LABOR MINISTER, TO CALL ON GOI HOME MINISTER BRAHMANANDA REDDI AND OM NE TA, GOI MINISTER OF STATE FOR HOME, WITH A LETTER FROM KARUNANIDHI EXPLAINING THE STAND OF THE DMK. KARUNANIDHI SAID THAT RAJARAM HAD MET REDDI AND OM MEHTA AND HANDED OVER HIS LETTER. RAJARAM WOULD ALSO TRY TO CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA BEFORE RETURNING TO MADRAS.

2. IN HIS LETTER TO THE GOI, KARUNANIDHI HAD EMPHASIZED THAT THE DMK DID NOT BELIEVE IN VIOLENCE OF ANY KIND. THE LETTER SAID: "OUR PARTY BELIEVES THAT ANY PROBLEM SHOULD OR COULD BE APPROACHED AND SOLVED IN A PARLIAMENTARY, LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC MANNER. I ASSURE YOU THAT HAVING REGARD TO THIS BASIC APPROACH OF OUR PARTY, NONE OF THE LEADERS OR PARTYMEN WILL EITHER RESORT

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TO OR INCITE ANY VIOLENT AGITATION AT ANY TIME. THE PRIME MINIS-

TER'S TOUR IN TAMIL NADU, NOW AS ON PRIOR OCCASIONS, HAS GONE OFF WITHOUT THE SLIGHTEST INCIDENT. THIS AMPLY PROVES THE POLITICAL TRADITION OF THE PEOPLE OF TAMIL NADU. WE ARE ACCUSTOMED TO PUTTING FORWARD OUR VIEWS AND DEMANDS THROUGH THE PRESS AND PLATFORM WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF LAW AND WE HAVE NEVER PERMITTED ANY VIOLENCE EVEN TO A SMALL EXTENT. I MAY ASSURE YOU THAT THE PEACE THAT PREVAILS IN TAMIL NADU WILL CONTINUE. I MAY ALSO ASSURE THAT OUR PARTY WILL STAND BY THE GVERNMENT KN ALL ITS STEPS TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER."

3. THIS WAS THE SECOND LETTER KARUNANIDHI HAD ADDRESSED TO THE GOI, THE FIRST LETTER HAVING BEEN SENT SOON AFTER THE DISMISSAL OF THE DMK MINISTRY AND THE IMPOSITION OF PRESIDENT'S RULE IN TAMIL NADU ON JANUARY 3. KARUNANIDHI ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT HE PLANNED TO LEAVE IN A FEW DAYS TO TOUR THE VARIOUS DISTRICTS FOR A WEEK AND MEET DMK WORKERS FOR THE PRUPOSES OF ASCERTAINING THEIR VIEWS ON PARTY AFFAIRS AND URGING THEM TO FOLLOW THE PATH OF DUTY, DIGNITY AND DISCIPLINE.

4. WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED BY BOTH DMK AND ADMK CONTACTS THAT THE TOP DMK LEADERS NOW FEAR THAT MRS. GANDHI IS ABOUT TO BAN THE DMK ON THE PRETEXT THAT IT IS COOPERATING WITH AND ENCOURAGING THE CPM TO CONDUCT AGITATIONS IN TAMIL NADU. KARUNANIDHI REPORTEDLY TOOK THE INITIATIVE TO SEE OM MEHTA ON THIS MATTER WHILE MEHTA WAS IN MADRAS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER THIS PAST WEEKEND. KARUNANIDHI AND SEVERAL OTHER TOP PARTY LEADERS MET FEBRUARY 17 TO DISCUSS HOW TO PROCEED TO SAVE THE PARTY FROM THE GRAVE THREAT TO ITS CONTINUED LEGAL OPERATION. THEY DECIDED TO SEND RAJARAM TO DELHI TO TRY TO MEET MRS. GANDHI AND ASSURE HER THAT THE DMK HAS NO INTENTION OF ENGAGING IN OR ENCOURAGING OTHERS TO VIOLENCE OR AGITATION.

5. THIS NEW THREAT COMES AT A TIME OF MOUNTING PRESSURES FROM DMK LEADERS AND WORKERS THAT KARUNANIDHI SHOULD STEP DOWN FROM THE PRESIDENSHIP OF THE DMK IN ORDER TO SAVE THE PARTY FROM DISINTEGRATION. AN ADMK SOURCE TELLS US THAT FORMER DMK MINISTER S. RAMACHANDRAN, WHO PUBLICLY INITIATED THIS MOVE, IS WORKING CLOSELY WITH DMK GENERAL SECRETARY V.R. NEDUNCHEZHIAN, FORMER EDUCATION MINISTER, TO CONVENE THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE DMK TO DECIDE THIS ISSUE. HE STATED THAT A MAJORITY OF THE GENERAL CONCIL CONFIDENTIAL

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MEMBERS SUPPORT THE MOVE FOR THE REMOVAL OF KARUNANIDHI. (ACCORD- INF TO PRESS REPORTS 80 OUT OF 475 MEMBERS OF THE DMK GENERAL COUNCIL HAVE SUPPORTED S. RAMACHANDRAN'S DEMAND THAT KARUNANIDHI STEP DOWN FROM THE PARTY PRESIDENSHIP.) HOWEVER, DMK SOURCES TDLL US THAT NEDUNCHEZHIAN AND K. ANBAZHAGAN, THE OTHER TWO KEY LEADERS OF THE PARTY, ARE STILL WITH KARUNANIDHI. KARUNANIDHI'S ANNOUNCED TOUR PROGRAM IS PROBABLY AN ATTEMPT TO GAIN TIME, BUT HE MAY NOT HAVE MUCH LEFT.

EAVES

UNQUOTE.

SAXBE

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